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ABSTRACT

As part of a larger study of the efficacy of the local boards of trustees for California's community colleges, the chief executive officer (CEO) of each community college district was surveyed to determine what proportion of the more than 400 board members in the state were women, what the current or recent vocations of the board members were, and how many board members had identifiable political support. Study findings, based on responses from all but one district, included the following: (1) 32.8% of California's community college board members were women; (2) 25% of the board members were retired, semi-retired, or not employed; (3) 21% of the board members were employed in the field of education, 11% were working in the law field, and 9.7% were working in a health-related occupation; (4) only 3.8% of the trustees were community college faculty or staff members; and (5) 15% of the trustees were supported in their election by an employees' organization. The survey instrument is included. (EJV)

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CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRUSTEES

Report Number One

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School of Education

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

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CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRUSTEES

REPORT NUMBER ONE

Leslie Wilbur and M. Stephen Sheldon

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Introduction

Until 1979 the California Community Colleges were supported primarily by local property taxes. Traditionally there had been no question that each college should have its own board of trustees and be controlled by the local tax-payers. However when the (in)famous Proposition 13 was passed, the situation changed substantially. Today, because about 75% of the money for the colleges comes from the state, the efficacy of the local board of trustees is in question. However, relatively little is known about the local boards. This report is the first in a series that will examine the characteristics of board members and various configurations of board support in the 70 community college districts in California.

The aftermath of Proposition 13 was a series of events which compounded Their effects on the community colleges. The effects increased as college district reserves were diminished and in many cases exhausted. A state "hit list," was introduced which, in effect, resulted in the loss of state funding based on attendance in "listed" courses. And when fees for attending community colleges were introduced for the first time in California, enrollments decreased again.

Declining enrollments and shrinking financial support were accompanied by fundamental shifts in the state's attitude toward

the mission of the community college. The series of negative events set the stage for what traditionally had been considered to be impossible: the dismissal of tenured, full-time faculty.

As early as 1981 several community colleges sent non-renewal of contract notices to more than a hundred tenured faculty. (These are called March 15 letters, referring to the last date in the school year which such notices can be legally sent.) The faculty reactions were immediate, virtually ignoring occasional administrative suggestions that the notices were necessary pro forma district actions that might turn out not to be a genuine legal prelude to actual non-renewal of contracts.

Predictably, faculty reactions to district boards' steps to deal with budget exigencies took the form of organized resistance. Teachers' unions already existed on many campuses. Ad hoc groups were also formed. A logical goal for such groups was for them to use the elective process to install board members more sympathetic toward faculty needs and priorities.

In at least one district the election of a faculty supported slate of candidates was followed by their rehiring of faculty who had received March 15 notices. In an additional action, the board took steps to remove administrators who seemed most responsible for the selection of faculty and programs for termination.

Observing the conflicts and issues often related to changes in the composition of community college boards, we began to wonder if there was a general movement in California toward active organized support for candidates. Moreover, we wondered what the vocations of board members might be at the present time.

For example, since we knew of a few community college

faculty in Southern California who were board members of districts other than their own, we wanted to find out if they were representative of an increasing, state-wide trend. Accompanying that question was another more easily answered question: of the more than four hundred board members, what percentage are female?

The outcome of our curiosity was a questionnaire which asked districts to supply information we could use to determine what the facts were about the characteristics of board members. What proportion were women? What were their current or recent vocations? How many had identifiable political support?

The Survey

The chief executive officer (CEO) of each district was sent a letter asking for his or her cooperation in describing the college trustees on three variables: sex, employment, and organizational support received by each trustee for election to the board. A questionnaire and a stamped return envelope were enclosed for the CEOs to respond to the request. A facsimile of the form appears in Figure 1. Few CEOs failed to return the questionnaire and those were reached by telephone so that the data set is complete. (There was but one district whose trustees refused to permit the CEO to give out information about their oragnizational support for election to the board.)

The Results

Table 1. shows the sex of the trustees. One third of the colleges board members were reported to be women. (In all cases the percentages reported are of the total reporting for the question being considered.)

FACSIMILE OF THE FORM FOR THE CEO OF EACH DISTRICT TO RETURN DATA ABOUT THE TRUSTEES

This information about the trustees of your community college district should be as accurate and as current as possible. If the board member is retired or semi-retired, so indicate and give his or her former or current principal occupation. For the election support item include up to the three largest organizations.

Member Designation	Sex (M or F)	Occupation	Organizational Election Support		
A	___	_____	_____	_____	_____
B	___	_____	_____	_____	_____
C	___	_____	_____	_____	_____
D	___	_____	_____	_____	_____
E	___	_____	_____	_____	_____
F	___	_____	_____	_____	_____
G	___	_____	_____	_____	_____

Additional Comments?

FIGURE 1. The Return Form for Describing Trustees

TABLE 1. SEX	Number	Percent
MALE	287	67.2 %
FEMALE	140	32.8 %
Total	427	100.0 %

Table 2 shows how active the trustees are on their jobs. About 25% are retired, semi-retired, or not employed. The variable label NOT EMPLOYED refers to those not retired and not seeking employment. As Table 3 shows, 35 of the 36 who fell in this category were women. Said another way, while less than one percent of the men were so labeled, 25 percent of the women were not employed. On the other hand, twice the proportion of the men were retired than that of the women; 18.5 percent to 9.3 percent.

TABLE 2. JOB ACTIVITY	Number	Percent
RETIRED	66	15.5 %
SEMI-RETIRED	7	1.6 %
ACTIVE	318	74.5 %
NOT EMPLOYED	36	8.4 %
Total	427	100.0 %

Table 4 gives the frequency distributions for the occupational areas into which the board of trustees' jobs fall and Table 4 shows the explicit jobs. Some occupations could not be categorized by area and more could not be categorized by job.

TABLE 3. SEX - (Y Axis) x JOB ACTIVITY - (X Axis)

	Number / Row % / Column % / Total %	RETIRED	SEMI-RETIRED	ACTIVE	NOT EMPLOYED	Row Totals
MALE		53	5	228	1	
		18.5	1.7	79.4	0.3	287
		80.3	71.4	71.7	2.8	67.2
		12.4	1.2	53.4	0.2	
FEMALE		13	2	90	35	
		9.3	1.4	64.3	25.0	140
		19.7	28.6	28.3	97.2	32.8
		3.0	0.5	21.1	8.2	
Column Totals		66	7	318	36	427
		15.5	1.6	74.5	8.4	100.0

Chi square = 75.92 Degrees of freedom = 3

Notice that the three areas of EDUCATION, K-12, CCC, and HIGHER, represent 21% of the total. Note also that of the 89 trustees

TABLE 4.

JOB-AREA	Number	Percent
CIVIL SERVICE	27	6.4 %
ENTREPRENEURIAL	22	5.2 %
COMMERCIAL	28	6.6 %
INDUSTRIAL	26	6.1 %
HEALTH	41	9.7 %
LAW ENFORCEMENT	11	2.6 %
REAL ESTATE	19	4.5 %
AGRICULTURE	32	7.6 %
EDUCATION/K-12	59	13.9 %
EDUCATION/CCC	16	3.8 %
EDUCATION/HIGHER	14	3.3 %
MILITARY	1	0.2 %
FINANCE	16	3.8 %
LAW	48	11.3 %
UNEMPLOYED NOT RETIRED	35	8.3 %
ART/ENTERTAINMENT	7	1.7 %
OTHER	21	5.0 %
Total	423	100.0 %

who work in, or were retired from, the field of education, only 16 or 3.3 percent of the total were affiliated with the CCC.

The areas of LAW and HEALTH were the second and third most frequent areas for employment. Of the explicit jobs shown in Table 5, LAWYER was is modal occupation with 53 trustees being so classified. EXECUTIVE, K-12 TEACHER, and OWNS BUSINESS, followed in frequency, in that order.

TABLE 5. JOB POSITION	Number	Percent
LAWYER	53	12.8 %
PHYSICIAN	10	2.4 %
DENTIST	9	2.2 %
OTHER HEALTH PROFESSIONALS	12	2.9 %
FARMER	15	3.6 %
RANCHER	11	2.7 %
FORESTER	3	0.7 %
RE AGENT	7	1.7 %
RE BROKER	4	1.0 %
RE DEVELOPER	5	1.2 %
RETAIL BUSINESS	6	1.4 %
EXECUTIVE	39	9.4 %
OWNS BUSINESS	33	8.0 %
ED K-12 TEACHER	38	9.2 %
ED K-12 ADMINISTRATOR	20	4.8 %
ED CC FACULTY	11	2.7 %
ED CC ADMINISTRATOR	3	0.7 %
HE PROFESSOR	8	1.9 %
HE ADMINISTRATOR	5	1.2 %
HOME MAKER	21	5.1 %
HOME MAKER ACTIVIST	11	2.7 %
ENGINEER	13	3.1 %
SCIENTIST	8	1.9 %
COMPUTER SCIENCE	6	1.4 %
OTHER	40	9.7 %
ACCOUNTANT	4	1.0 %
SOCIAL WORK	5	1.4 %
CLERGY	6	1.4 %
OFFICE MANAGEMENT	4	1.0 %
FINANCIAL PLANNING	3	0.7 %
Total	415	100.0 %

Tables 6, 7, and 8, show the frequency with which various

organizations supported the elections of trustees. The Tables represent the first, second and third organizations respectively.

TABLE 6. FIRST ORGANIZATION		
ETHNIC	8	6.8 %
TEACHER	66	56.4 %
STAFF	2	1.7 %
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE	6	5.1 %
POLITICAL	10	8.5 %
SERVICE CLUBS	11	9.4 %
MEDIA	5	4.3 %
OTHER	6	5.1 %
CHURCH	3	2.6 %
Total	117	100.0 %

TABLE 7. SECOND ORGANIZATION	Number	Percent
ETHNIC	6	10.7 %
TEACHER	14	25.0 %
STAFF	14	25.0 %
OTHER LABOR	2	3.6 %
POLITICAL	4	7.1 %
SERVICE CLUBS	6	10.7 %
MEDIA	1	1.8 %
BUSINESS	3	5.4 %
OTHER	3	5.4 %
CHURCH	3	5.4 %
Total	56	100.0 %

TABLE 8. THIRD ORGANIZATION	Number	Percent
ETHNIC	5	41.7 %
TEACHER	1	8.3 %
STAFF	1	8.3 %
OTHER LABOR	1	8.3 %
POLITICAL	1	8.3 %
OTHER	3	25.0 %
Total	12	100.0 %

Only 117 out of the 427 trustees, or 27% were helped by any organization, 56, or 13% by two organizations, and 12, or 3%, by three. Of the total, only 15% were supported by employees' organizations, primarily the American Federation of Teachers and

the California Education Association.

There were 77 trustees in 26 districtsreported to have been helped in their election by the community college employee's associations. Of these 26 districts, 14 had 3 or more board members assisted by these unions.

Summary

1. We learned that approximately one-third of California's community college board members are women. The percentages may seem unexpectedly high, compared with earlier board membership patterns, whereby trustees were typically expected to be male. One could argue, as we do, that one-half of the trustees should be women. By the same token many more trustees should be Hispanic, Black, and Asian. All this notwithstanding one-third were in fact, women.

2. We learned that the number of community college employees (including faculty) holding board membership is relatively small, 16 or 3.8 percent, exceeded by the majority of the other vocational groups. Almost four times as many (16 to 59) come from the K-12 level level of education. Nearly as many board members come from other institutions of higher education as from the community colleges, 14 to 16.

3. We learned that a relatively small percentage of Trustees (27%) were helped by any identifiable organization. Occasional, casual conversations with our respondents suggested that organized, identifiable political support may be an activity that emerges chiefly when there is a unifying (or divisive!) issue that provides the pressure necessary for organizing political

support. Once the goal has been achieved, there may be no need for subsequent activity if the next election consists of candidates largely unopposed.

Community college district board members come from remarkably diverse vocations. In combination, educators from all levels form the largest group, but even in combination they comprise only 17%. Lawyers make up 13%, and the other vocations are remarkably modest in size.

In conclusion, based on the study of all 70 districts, it seems that community college employees are not a significantly large proportion of California Community College district trustees. We can also say that our findings suggest that the majority of the board candidates were not supported by identifiable organizations. However, of those organizations, the majority represented the interests of district employees, non-certificated as well as certificated.

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